

these discussions, or distortions, are manifold; and collectively, they constitute nothing less than a coordinated attack on virtually every stage and every aspect of the science/policy interaction.

Evidence of this attack comes from many sources, including a GAO study which I am holding up here, which I requested along with my ranking member on the Committee on Science, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON). Interestingly and perhaps tellingly, we had asked that a full committee hearing be conducted to study this matter; but we were denied that privilege, leaving us to hold a somewhat symbolic hearing of our own.

Nevertheless, based on testimony from that hearing and numerous other sources, it is apparent to me and others that the assaults on scientific independence and integrity includes all of the following: limitations of the questions that are allowed to be asked; constraints on the methods that are used to seek answers to questions; limits or elimination of funding and resources to pursue certain questions that are not politically correct; biased selections of people who will be allowed to ask questions or serve on scientific panels; active and intentional suppression of findings that are not to official liking; unjustified claims and inflation of studies or results that are approved of by the administration; punishment or ridicule of scientists who disagree with official administration dogma; retribution for political involvement on the part of scientists; disregard of discomfiting scientific evidence; placement of nongovernmental ideologues in charge of international missions to supervise U.S. positions, vis-a-vis, scientific discussion; and creation of a climate in which scientists and policymakers have begun actually to self-censor or self-select and actually leave government service.

Thomas Jefferson wrote in a letter to his nephew: "Question with boldness even the existence of a God because, if there be one, He must more approve the homage of reason, than that of blindfolded fear." Clearly, at least in his private letters, Jefferson was not one to believe in limiting questions, and indeed, if one visits Monticello and sees his love for science, one realizes how important that was to him.

When one considers that Benjamin Franklin was considered one of the greatest scientists of his age and that Madison, Jefferson, and Washington and many of the Founders had a profound interest in science, we realize the importance of that principle to the founding principles of this Nation.

But we must contrast that attitude of the Framers with an administration that removes from a National Cancer Institute Web site fact sheets showing there is no empirical evidence linking abortion to breast cancer. Contrast that attitude of scientific inquiry with suppressing analyses of clean air legislation that will save lives and cut pol-

lution at negligible cost. Contrast the Framers' attitude with initiatives in Congress to cut funding for research relating to sexually transmitted disease prevention. Contrast that attitude with limits to stem cell research. Contrast that attitude of the Framers with the selective appointment or withdrawal of experts on scientific advisory panels. Contrast that attitude with the willful stacking of advisory committees and removal of any voices deemed unfriendly to a predetermined outcome.

Within the scientific community, the effect of the administration's and congressional actions have been chilling and demoralizing. Researchers are practicing self-censorship or leaving government careers entirely.

Let me conclude, if I may, with one final comment of Richard Feynman. He said, "It is our responsibility as scientists, knowing the great process which comes from a satisfactory philosophy of ignorance, knowing of the great progress which is the fruit of freedom of thought, to proclaim the value of this freedom; to teach how doubt is not to be feared but welcomed and discussed; and to demand this freedom as our duty to all coming generations."

We must do that not only as scientists but as Representatives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. HARRIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. HARRIS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### TORT REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak about tort reform, but before I do that I would like to use some of the comments of my colleague and friend who has just spoken about scientific integrity and maybe the creation of a climate that self-selects facts but disregards the scientific evidence, the active suppression of that evidence and questioning and removal of voices that are contrary to predetermined outcomes.

I was certain that he was going to bring in CBS news and Dan Rather into the thing, but he stopped one step short. So I would like to add CBS news and Dan Rather to the list of people who preselect their facts, who preselect and predetermine the outcomes, and then compliment CBS news and Dan Rather for their pursuit of truth in front of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we continue to talk about on this House floor is the way that businesses are driven off the shores of America into other countries. Very often we

seem to simply omit the discussion of tort reform and the need for tort reform and the cost to not only businesses but to individuals in this country for lawsuits, for frivolous lawsuits, litigation.

Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Chamber ran an ad 2 years ago which described the cost of every car to include \$500 for the cost of legal protection. That means that every consumer who buys a new car contributes \$500 to the trial lawyers in this Nation. Is it any surprise then, Mr. Speaker, that this year the trial lawyers have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars into the 527s in order to buy influence and to influence the outcome of the elections?

It is no surprise to me, Mr. Speaker, because we find that the trial lawyers right now are pulling somewhere between 2.5 to 3 percent of the Nation's economy. Keep in mind that we are trying at this moment to get a 4 percent rate of growth year after year, and we are doing that; but at the same time, the trial lawyers are pulling 2.5 to 3 percent of the economy out the bottom.

Now, if that money were going to productivity and the hiring of people, that would be one thing; but what we find is that trial lawyers are escalating into the category of the world's richest people, not based on productivity, not based on what they add to the economy, but based on what they take out of the economy.

This affects every single one of us when they go to get a job. We find that the companies pay less because of the threat of lawsuits.

American Express told us in New York last year, a group of business leaders who were in the Congress, at that point that if we do not limit the frivolous lawsuits, if we do not limit class action lawsuits in this Nation, that we are going to drive out every single major corporation; that, in fact, within 20 years there would not be a single major corporation left in America.

We have to wonder then where are we going to get our pension plans funded. Where are we going to have the taxes that are paid to the Federal Government to support our retirees? It is a huge problem, and yet the trial lawyers continue to buy influence at an amazing rate, and they buy influence in this institution.

Here in the House, we have passed multiple forms of lawsuit abuse protection; but somehow, once they leave the doors of this institution, they simply are bottled up and kept dormant.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for the partisan politics that limit the debate and that limit the actions to stop the frivolous lawsuits. It is time for the partisan politics to stop and for us to protect the American consumer, for us to protect American businesses.

At one point last year, the insurance agents' representative for the Nation came into my office and gave me a list of maybe 30 or 40 new businesses, new